

REMARKS

The applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgement of the claim for priority under section 119 and the notice that all of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

The applicants acknowledge and appreciate receiving an initialed copy of the form PTO-1449 that was filed on 27 January 2004.

Claims 3-7 and 9-11 are pending. Claims 1, 2 and 8 have been canceled. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Sorensen, Snyder, Hough, or Igel et al. However, claim 1 has been canceled. Thus, this rejection will not be discussed.

Claims 1, 8, and 11 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Sawada et al. Claims 1 and 8 have been canceled and will not be discussed. As for claim 11, the applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn, because claim 11 now depends on claim 9, which was said to contain allowable subject matter.

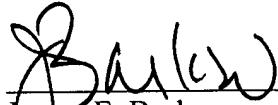
Claims 2 and 10 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sawada et al. Claim 2 has been canceled and will not be discussed. As for claim 10, the applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn, because claim 10 now depends on claim 9, which was said to contain allowable subject matter.

Claims 3-7 and 9 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but were said to be allowable if written in independent form. Claims 3, 4 and 9 have been written in independent form including the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. Therefore, claims 3, 4, and 9 and their dependents are considered to be in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Please charge any unforeseen fees that may be due to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,



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